

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed and considered the Examiner's Action mailed February 24, 2004. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the comments set forth below.

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 11-12 are amended and new claim 13 is presented directed to an air-bag. Accordingly, claims 1-13 are pending in the present application.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated U.S. Patent No. 4,997,502 to Schnaars as explained in paragraph 3 of the Action. Claims 1, 4, 6 and 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the alleged admitted prior art (specification pages 1-3) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,410,250 to Kulie, et al (hereinafter referred to as "Kulie") as explained in paragraph 5 spanning pages 3 and 4 of the Action. Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the alleged admitted prior art and Kulie and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,994,225 to Davis as explained in paragraph 6 of the Action. Claims 1-3 and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of JP601569032 to Yamauchi and Schnaars as explained in paragraph 7. Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the alleged admitted prior art in view of Yamauchi and Schnaars and further in view of Davis. Claims 7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the alleged noted prior art in view of Yamauchi and Schnaars and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,288,454 to Hobson as explained in paragraph 9 of the Action. In view of the foregoing amendments and the comments set forth below, it is believed that these

rejections are no longer applicable and withdrawal of the same is requested.

Previously presented independent claims 1, 11 and 12 have been amended to define the structure of an air-bag disclosed in the present application. In particular, as shown in Fig. 1 and described in the first full paragraph 5 of the present application, the air-bag of the independent claims is defined as being formed with a plurality of inflatable cells that are separated from one another by seams. Thus, as positively recited in independent claims 1, 11 and 12, a method of fabricating an air-bag includes (1) forming an air-bag with a plurality of inflatable cells that are separated from one another by seams; (2) introducing a sealant into an interior of the air-bag and blowing the sealant into contact with the interior of each inflatable cell of the air-bag with a propellant gas so the sealant material forms a sealant layer on the interior of each inflatable cell of the air-bag.

As argued previously Schnaars is directed to a method for forming a bag that is used as a fabric bulk bag for transporting dry or liquid bulk. Nowhere does Schnaars disclose, teach or even suggest forming an air-bag from at least one layer of fabric where the airbag is formed with a plurality of inflatable cells that are separated from one another by seams. In fact, Schnaars only discloses a bulk bag 72 with a single chamber. There are no seams connecting this single chamber to another inflatable chamber. It is the plurality of inflatable cells that define an air-bag as described by the present application. Accordingly, Schnaars cannot anticipate independent claims 1, 11 and 12 and their dependent claims 2-10 because it fails to disclose the step of forming an air-bag.

According to paragraph 5 of the Action, "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the sealant coating to

the interior of the side-curtain air-bag taught by the admitted prior art using a well known interior spray coating process such as that shown for example by Kulie to overcome the disadvantages associated with applying the sealant to the exterior of the side-curtain air-bag.” Pages 1-3 of the present application teach that an air-bag is of a complex form and cannot be readily turned inside-out. As a result, the so-called admitted prior art teaches that the coating has to be applied to the exterior of the air-bag. That is, pages 1-3 of the present application teach that an air-bag formed with a plurality of air chambers must be coated to the exterior of the air-bag as it is not possible to turn an air-bag with a plurality of inflatable cells inside-out. Kulie does not provide a teaching of spraying the interior of an air-bag with a plurality of inflatable cells. Kulie merely teaches a spraying nozzle assembly for the packaging of an electrical circuit within containers. As shown in Figs. 1-3, Kulie teaches spraying a resin from a nozzle 43 into a single container 10. Nowhere does Kulie disclose, teach or even suggest a spray nozzle assembly for introducing a sealant into an interior of an air-bag and blowing the sealant into contact with the interior of each inflatable cell of the air-bag with a propellant gas as required by independent claims 1, 11 and 12. Accordingly, Kulie does not teach a well known interior spray coating process for applying sealant to the interior of each inflatable cell of the air-bag. Further, the so-called admitted prior art does not teach one of ordinary skill to apply sealant coating to the interior of the side-curtain air-bag but teaches against applying sealant coating to the interior of the side-curtain air-bag because they have a plurality of inflatable cells.

Yamauchi, likewise, fails to disclose, teach or suggest a parison coating process for applying sealant to interior surfaces of an outer cover material. While Yamauchi

indicates that it is directed to manufacture of air-bags for a vehicle, Yamauchi does not indicate that its air-bag has a plurality of inflatable cells that are interconnected with seams as required by independent claims 1 and 11-13. Yamauchi refers to an outer cover material being formed by the parison 13 in its abstract. Thus, it is believe that Yamauchi refers to an air-bag that has single opening and is easily reversed after its exterior is coated. This is not the claimed invention. Nowhere does Yamauchi provide any hint or suggestion to provide an interior sealing step to an air-bag formed with a plurality of inflatable cells.

Davis is directed to a method and apparatus for protecting an occupant of a vehicle during a collision via an inflatable confinement made of fabric to which an elastomer coating has been applied. According to Davis, the fabric is applied over a mold which is followed by an application of an elastomer layer. Thus, Davis teaches applying an elastomer layer to the exterior of the fabric molded bag. That is, Davis, like Yamauchi teaches that upon removal of the air-bag from the mold, the air-bag is preferably reversed such that the untreated side of the fabric is exposed as discussed of the Background of the Invention of the instant invention. Accordingly, Davis teaches against applying an elastomer coating to an interior of an air-bag, let alone to the interior of each inflatable cell of the air-bag.

Hobson is directed to a method of forming hollow articles of plastic material. Accordingly, Hobson does not provide a teaching or suggesting for coating an interior of an air-bag with a plurality of inflatable cells as claimed by Applicants. Consequently, Davis cannot render the claimed invention obvious.

New independent claim 13 is directed to an air-bag, like dependent claim 10. However, dependent claim 13 adds that the air-bag is comprised of an upper layer of fabric and a lower layer of fabric that are interconnected by seams where the seams are formed by weaving together threads from the upper layer of fabric together with threads from the lower layer of fabric. This is disclosed in the second full paragraph of page 5 of the present application. Thus, the seams are integrally formed with the fabric of the air-bag and it would not be possible to turn the air-bag inside-out as done with the less complex bags. Nowhere does Schnaars, Kulie, Davis or Hobson disclose, teach or even suggest an air-bag with a plurality of inflatable cells that are formed by weaving threads from an upper layer of fabric with threads of a lower layer of fabric as claimed by Applicants. Accordingly, the prior art of record does not render independent claim 13 unpatentable.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 11, 12, and 13, as well as their depending claims, 2-10 are patentable over the art of record. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application is respectfully requested.

A request for the necessary extension in the period for filing this response, as well as a check in payment of the applicable extension fee are attached.

If the Examiner believes that a conference would help to advance the prosecution of the instant application, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine M. Voorhees", is written over a horizontal line.

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Date: June 24, 2004

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